

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

B, 1. (currently amended) A refractory device for use in the teeming of molten metal, comprising a ceramic pouring tube element-10, supported in by a metallic can-11, in which a ceramic support element 12-is encapsulated and a shock-absorbing interface zone 13-is located between said ~~metallic can-11~~ ceramic support element and the ceramic pouring tube element-10, in which zone there is provided a material the thermal properties of which are such that it is substantially solid at ambient temperatures but becomes deformable at elevated temperatures experienced during metal teeming, said shock-absorbing interface zone being isolated from molten metal poured through the ceramic pouring tube element.

2. (original) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the material selected for use in the interface zone 13 is structurally solid at temperatures up to about 700° C and becomes deformable without any appreciable chemical degradation at temperatures above about 700° C.

3. (original) A refractory device according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the material providing the interface zone 13 comprises a pyroplastic ceramic material.

4. (previously amended) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the interface zone 13 comprises a ceramic paste or bonding agent or additional structural ceramic element.

5. (previously amended) A refractory device according to claim 3, wherein the pyroplastic material is a frittable composition applied over at least one co-operating assembly surfaces of the pouring tube element and the support element.

6. (currently amended) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the ceramic support element 12-is fully encapsulated within the metallic can-11, and fits with and around the upper part of the pouring tube element 10-by virtue of said ceramic support 12-element having an internal profile corresponding sufficiently to the external profile of the pouring tube.

7. (original) A refractory device according to claim 6, wherein the respective profiles are such as to provide corresponding interferences fits surfaces or otherwise matching.

8. (currently amended) A refractory device for use in the teeming of molten metal, comprising a ceramic pouring tube element, supported by a metallic can, in which a ceramic support element is encapsulated and a shock-absorbing interface zone is located between said ceramic support element and the ceramic pouring tube element, in which zone there is provided a material the thermal properties of which are such that it is substantially solid at ambient temperatures but becomes deformable at elevated temperatures experienced during metal teeming, said shock-absorbing interface zone being isolated from molten metal poured through the ceramic pouring tube element~~according to claim 1~~, wherein the ceramic support element ~~is~~ pre-formed from a ceramic material of low thermal conductivity, or formed *in situ* by a suitable casting operation.

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9. (currently amended) A refractory device for use in the teeming of molten metal, comprising a ceramic pouring tube element, supported by a metallic can, in which a ceramic support element is encapsulated and a shock-absorbing interface zone is located between said ceramic support element and the ceramic pouring tube element, in which zone there is provided a material the thermal properties of which are such that it is substantially solid at ambient temperatures but becomes deformable at elevated temperatures experienced during metal teeming, said shock-absorbing interface zone being isolated from molten metal poured through the ceramic pouring tube element~~according to claim 1~~, wherein the refractory device is finished to suit its intended purpose.

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